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December 30, 1981

Hon. Alexander Haig
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C. 20005

Re: U. S. Posture on Israel:
(1) Iraq Nuclear Reactor
(2) PLO Headquarters in Beirut
(3) Golan Heights; AWACS for Saudi Arabia

My Dear Mr. Secretary:

The undersigned is a Democrat who felt compelled, in the 1980 Presidential Election, as between Carter and Reagan to opt for Reagan, and I would vote the same way, as of this moment.

But I, and many another American, who regard Israel as the only loyal support for the United States in the Middle East, am deeply troubled, by the Administration's acts in the four above, inter-related incidents.

Some of the reasons why, are in the annexed two reprints, one from The New York Times of December 24, by William Safire on "Reagan 'Suspends' Israel", and the other by the Editorial Board of The Wall Street Journal, December 21, 1981 "Beyond the Heights".

Several decades ago, San Francisco's famous longshoreman philosopher Eric Hoffer wrote in an editorial, in a mood of prophecy, that "As Israel goes, so goes the United States." Suffice it, that it is not in the American interest as I see it, to butter up Arab potentates (Saudi Arabia) and their radical blackmailers (PLO), by increasing their capacity for aggression, and decreasing Israel's capacity for defense.

I, and millions of other Americans, will hope for a reversal in the Administration's present course on this subject.

Leonard Horwin Law Corporation
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Dear Mr. Horwin:

Secretary Haig has asked me to respond to your letter on December 30 regarding U.S. policy toward Israel. In particular, you question the U.S. position on Israel's bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor, its attack on PLO headquarters in Beirut, its decision to promulgate the Golan Heights law, and the AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia.

The United States has had a close relationship with Israel since 1948. Like good friends, however, the United States and Israel do not always see eye-to-eye on all issues. The four events you cited in your letter are illustrative of those issues about which we have had differences.

Israel's attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor was an unprecedented action which seriously impacted upon an already tense area in the region and complicated efforts to peacefully resolve outstanding problems there. Based upon the President's judgment that Israel had not exhausted the diplomatic alternatives available to it to address its concerns over the Iraqi nuclear program, the U.S. temporarily suspended delivery of four F-16 aircraft to Israel and ordered a review of the implications of the Israeli action for the agreement which governs Israeli use of U.S.-supplied military equipment.

Our review was complicated by the escalation in July of the cycle of violence on both sides of the Israel-Lebanon border, including Israeli air attacks on Beirut and Palestinian rocket attacks on towns in northern Israel. We were especially concerned by the heavy civilian casualties that occurred in Lebanon as well as the civilian deaths that occurred in Israel.

tension in the region, the suspension of F-16 aircraft deliveries to Israel continued, eventually including ten additional F-16's and two F-15's scheduled for delivery. In its review the Administration examined events and trends in the Middle East, particularly the events in Lebanon leading to a ceasefire there on July 24. The ceasefire signalled a very positive new element in the region, one which we hope will continue and which perhaps will make possible other steps toward peace in that troubled area. Following discussion with the Government of Israel, consultations with the Congress, and completion of the Administration's review, the President lifted the suspension of military aircraft deliveries to Israel.

The Administration's decision to sell AWACS aircraft and F-15 enhancement equipment to Saudi Arabia was one that was carefully considered from the perspective of the consequences such a sale would have on Israel's security. The President decided to proceed with the AWACS sale only after he was convinced that it would not adversely affect our commitment to Israel's fundamental security interests in the region.

The U.S. government was greatly disturbed by Israel's December 14 action to extend its laws, jurisdiction, and administration to the occupied Golan Heights. We had no advance notice from the Israelis about this step. We informed Israel that we neither accepted their explanation nor recognized their action, which in our view was inconsistent with both the letter and the spirit of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the basis for the peace process in the Middle East.

Israel's action was particularly disappointing at a moment when the West was facing a serious political crisis in Poland and only a few weeks after the U.S. had signed, on November 30, the Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation with Israel. The spirit of that agreement obliged its parties to give it consideration in its decision the implications for the broad policy concerns of the others. We do not believe that spirit was upheld in Israel's decision on the Golan [illegible]

The actions the United States took to indicate its displeasure in proceeding for the time being with implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding or with discussions

bout the use of U.S. military assistance funds to help
srael's defense industry in no way interrupted the flow of
ssistance to Israel under our security or economic aid
rograms.

You may be assured that we remain committed to helping
srael maintain its technological and military advantages.
n our decisions regarding strategic initiatives in the
egion, Israel's security continues to be a primary
bjective of U.S. policy. The United States has had a close
elationship with Israel since its independence in 1948.
his relationship is based on the common values shared
etween Israel and the U.S.: a devotion to democracy and
he rule of law, respect for the rights of the individuals,
commitment to social welfare, and a strong desire for
eace. Support for Israel's security and well-being has
ong been and continues to be a cornerstone of American
oreign policy.

Sincerely,

Peter Demetable Burleigh
Acting Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Near Eastern
and South Asian Affairs

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